

# How to Lead Conversational Prayer

## The Purpose of Prayer

Group prayer was a characteristic of the early Christians. We read in Acts 12:12 that Peter went to the house of Mary where many were gathered for prayer. Earlier in Acts, we read that the disciples

“went up to the upper room, where they were staying.... These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women” (Acts 1:13–14).

Old Testament characters also participated in group prayer. For example, 2 Chronicles 6:13–42 records Solomon praying as all Israel gathered around.

Remember that the **purpose of your prayer time is to communicate with God**. It should never be viewed as a ritual or as a time to “preach” to one another.

## Conversational Prayer

During a time of conversational prayer, the group members talk to God the same way they would talk to a friend who is in the room with them. Members should use everyday conversational language. Encourage the group (especially a group unfamiliar with group prayer) to feel free to pray sentence prayers, expressing only a brief thought in six words or so. They don't have to pray long, elaborate prayers. Everyone is free to pray, or not to pray, as the Spirit directs. Don't be concerned about silence – allow God to speak to you and the other individuals in the group during times of silence.

## Ways to Lead Conversational Prayer

Several different ways of leading conversational prayer are discussed below. You could choose one of these methods to guide your prayer time or use several to provide variety.

### **.1. Leader-Introduced Topics**

Introduce a prayer topic or request, one at a time. The group will then pray about this topic or request. When finished, the leader will introduce another topic or request. Both the number and types of topics introduced may vary. It is always helpful to designate a specific

person to close each time. This helps insure that the prayer time will not bog down when everyone has had the opportunity to pray if they so desire.

### **Some Possible Topics for Prayer:**

Thanksgiving. Thank God for: His love, His forgiveness, the beautiful day, ways He is working in different lives, etc.

Thank God for something that has happened in your life in the past 24 hours.

“Please help...” (yourself or someone else).

Thank God for how He will meet those desires and requests.

## **.2. Shared Prayer Requests**

Allow the group to share prayer requests.

As a prayer request is offered, you could ask another member to be responsible to pray for that request during the prayer time. This ensures that each person's request will be prayed for by at least one other person.

You might want to have group members record on a sheet of paper each request as it is given. They could then refer to the list during the group prayer time as well as throughout the week as a reminder to continue to pray for one another.

You could allow group members to volunteer to pray for requests without assigning them or writing them down. The group would then rely on their memories during the prayer time.

You may wish to pray for each request as soon as it is given, before the next request is shared.

## **.3. Pray Through Scripture**

This method allows the group to use one or more passages of scripture as a prayer guide. You can choose any passage that you feel will be appropriate. Here are some examples:

- Choose a Psalm of praise, such as Psalm 103, Psalm 145 or Psalm 150.
- Teach the group to pray using the following procedure:
  - 1.The first person reads a phrase or an entire verse aloud, pausing to pray a simple prayer as inspired by the scripture and led by the Lord.
  - 2.Other members of the group join in audibly or silently agree.

- 3.The next person reads a different verse, pausing to pray aloud as he is impressed by the Lord.
- 4.Continue the same way around the group.

## **.4. Use the “ACTS” Acrostic**

You can simply describe the format below or you could also explore the concept at length through one or more Bible studies on each word. The format goes like this:

### **•Adoration**

Definition: Worshipping and praising God, exalting Him in your heart and your mind and with your words.

Some ideas:

- Praise and Pray through a Psalm
- Sing
- Use a list of God’s attributes to praise Him for who He is.

Take time to adore God, praising Him for His attributes such as His loving-kindness, His holiness, His compassion, His majesty, etc

### **•Confession**

Definition: Agreeing with God concerning any sins He brings to mind in order to restore fellowship with Him. (Note: Always pray silently during personal confession.)

Confession can follow the following steps:

- 1.Review 1 John 1:5–9.
- 2.As you spend time adoring God, He will bring to mind what you need to confess.
- 3.Allow time for confession (let God speak to each person about any unconfessed sin).

### **•Thanksgiving**

Definition: Giving thanks to God for who He is, what He has done, what He will continue to do in your life and what He is doing in the ministry; a prayer expressing gratitude.

Look at verses such as:

1 Thessalonians 5:18,  
Ephesians 5:20,  
Psalm 108:3,  
Psalm 50:23.

Then, spend time in thanksgiving.

- Supplication**

Definition: Imploring God by means of a petition or an entreaty.

Read:

Philippians 4:6-7;

Psalm 116:1-2.

Lead the group in supplication by praying aloud.

- Be Creative!**

The above is not a formula or something set in concrete. You can switch the elements around, eliminate some of them or do something completely different. ACTS is a place to start and to spur ideas. Prayer should never be boring or monotonous – try to make it a fun time where those who come leave feeling refreshed and renewed. Use scripture often during the prayer meeting.

## **.5. Use the “PRAY” Acrostic**

This may be developed in the same way as ACTS.

Praise

Repent

Ask for someone else

Your own needs

## **.6. Pray for the Fulfillment of the Great Commission, using scripture. Win people to Christ through prayer.**

Pray that God will prepare individuals' hearts to understand and respond to the gospel (John 6:44).

Pray that God will motivate believers to share the gospel with the unbelievers (Matthew 9:37-38; Colossians 4:3).

Recognize that Satan has blinded and captivated the unbeliever, and acknowledge (claim) Christ's victory over him (Ephesians 6:12, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 2 Timothy 2:25-26; 1 John 3:8).

Persist in these prayers (Daniel 10:12-13a; Luke 18:1-8).

## **.7. Build People in Christ Through Prayer**

- Thank God for them (Philippians 1:3).
- Pray for deliverance from evil (unprincipled) companions (2 Thessalonians 3:2).
- Pray that they will walk worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1:10).
- Pray for wisdom and revelation in knowledge of Christ (Ephesians 1:17)
- Pray for them to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner person (Ephesians 3:16).
- Pray for their unity in the Spirit with other believers (John 17:23).
- Pray that their love may abound and that they may approve the things that are excellent (Philippians 1:9,10).
- Pray for boldness and opportunities to present the gospel to others (Colossians 4:3, Ephesians 6:19,20).
- Pray that they may be completely mature and be fully assured in all the will of God (Colossians 4:12)
- “Persist in these prayers” (Ephesians 6:18).

## **.8. Send People for Christ Through Prayer**

Recognize the problem of the labor shortage in the spiritual harvest (Matthew 9:37–8; Romans 10:13-15).

Make a list of candidates to be sent by the Lord (Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 9:37–38) and pray persistently for them.

Pray that laborers will be thrust forth into specific communities and countries.

Claim the fulfillment of the Great Commission in your area and the world, according to His command and promise (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 John 5:14–15).

Mobilize and teach others to pray for laborers (2 Timothy 2:2).

To help expand the group’s world vision, pray for specific country, overseas mission group, or overseas Christian workers. (Your group may want to “adopt” a country to pray for regularly.)

## **.9. Use Hymns**

Sing a hymn prayerfully, and afterwards, use the words of the hymn to guide the prayer time.

## **.10. Use the Attributes of God**

Select one or more attributes of God and spend the time meditating on those attributes and praising Him for His attributes. Share answers to prayer and spend the time thanking God for the answers and His faithfulness.

**We hope you found these suggestions helpful.**